DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 223 047 EC 150 348

AUTHOR	Fehrle, Carl C.; And Others
TITLE	The Most-Asked Questions about Gifted Children: Answers for Parents and Educators.
INSTITUTION	Missouri Univ., Columbia. Program of Continuing Professional Education.
REPORT NO	UED-68-7/82/6M
PUB DATE	[82]
NOTE	36p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Extension Publications, 222 S. 5th St., University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211 (UED-68, $2.00).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Child Rearing; Definitions; *Discipline; Elementary Secondary Education; *Gifted; *Parent Role; Special Programs; *Student Characteristics; Talent Identification; *Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS	Parent Materials

ABSTRACT

Intended for both parents and educators, the booklet offers answers to the questions parents ask about their gifted children. The 64 questions are divided into 6 major categories--definitions of giftedness, ways to help parents identify gifted children, schooling for the gifted child, understanding gifted children, help for the gifted child, and discipline. Specific topics covered by the questions include the following: areas of giftedness, problems faced by gifted children, special programs for the gifted, identification of the gifted preschooler, interpretation of the intelligence quotient, the relationship between intelligence and achievement, children from deprived home environments, school selection, the role of senior citizens with the gifted, the accelerated program, characteristics of special programs, boredom in the gifted child, awareness of career possibilities for the gifted child, development of creative reading skills, dealing with the gifted child, the differences in creativity between males and females, involvement of parents and other community members in the gifted program, pitfalls for parents of the gifted, counseling for gifted children, television and the gifted child, motivation of the gifted child, emotional development, ways to deal with behavioral problems, strategies for dealing with discipline problems, techniques for parents in dealing with a child's discipline problem, and school counseling for the gifted. A selected reading list and information on ordering publications complete the booklet. (SW)

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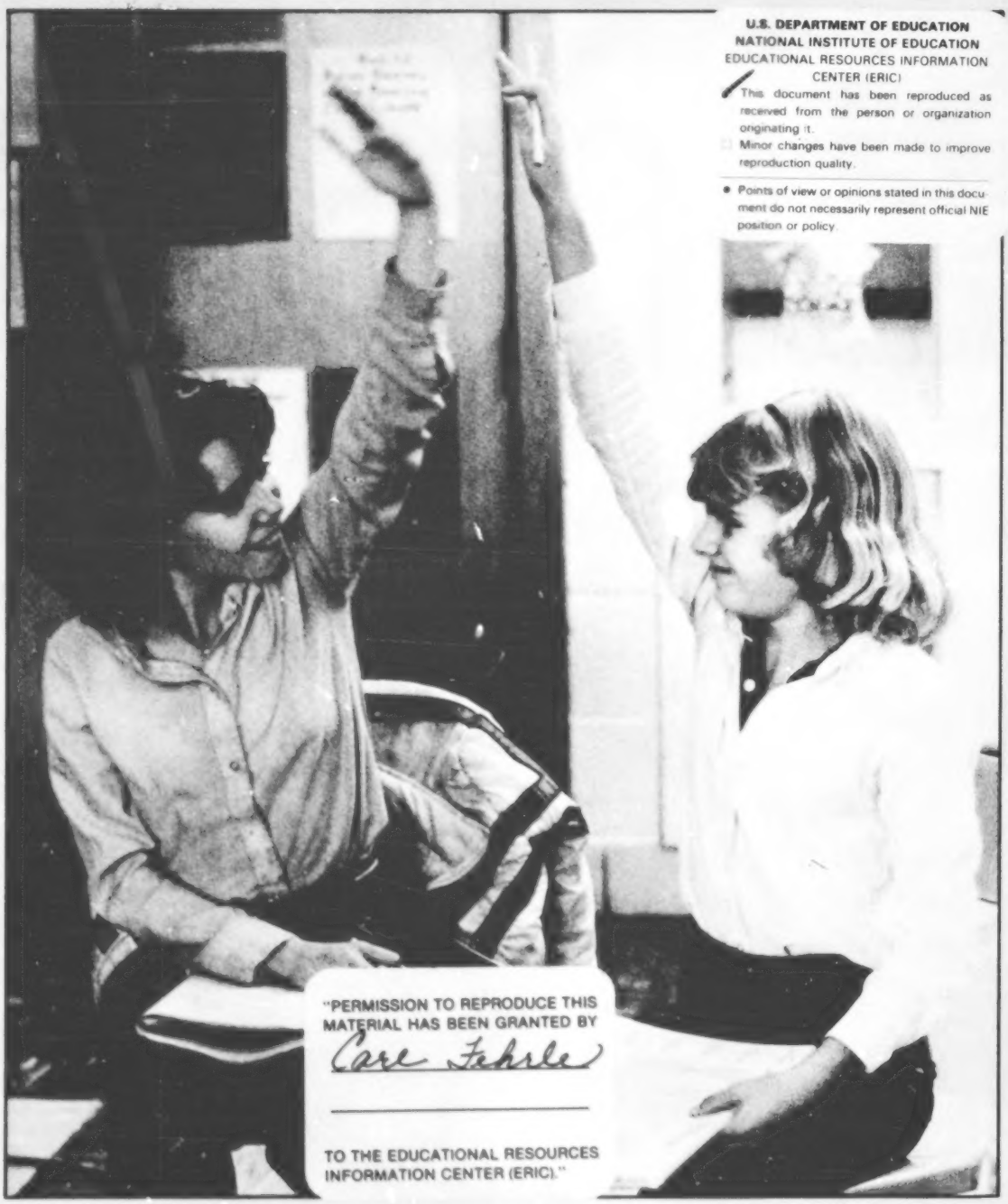

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The Most-Asked Questions About Gifted Children

Answers for Parents and Educators

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Extension Division—University of Missouri-Columbia Program of Continuing Professional Education

Cover: Beth Krumm (left) and Amy McDonald, Russell Boulevard Elementary School, Columbia, Mo.

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Introduction

This booklet answers the questions parents ask about their gifted children. In compiling these questions and answers, our goal is to provide parents and educators with the resources they need to answer questions and solve problems. Secondly, our aim is to shed some light on the unique problems of gifted children and to provide some insight into possible solutions.

We have designed this booklet both as a guide for parents and as a tool for educators to use with parents of gifted children. In these pages, parents and educators will find practical answers to such questions as:

- Should children know they have been identified as being gifted?
- Can I review the school's informational folder on my child?
- Should I treat my gifted child differently?

The answers to these questions draw upon the experiences of parents and educators and the advice of the experts. Many of the answers offer specific suggestions for school programs, home projects and classroom activities.

Kim Duncan participates in a classroom problem-solving exercise. She goes to school at Russell Boulevard Elementary School, Columbia, Mo.

Defining Giftedness

1. What does giftedness mean?

Parents, educators and students have always shown an interest in men and women with superior ability or giftedness. But not until the U.S.S.R. launched the satellite Sputnik into the space race in 1957 did people in the United States demonstrate concern for new technology and consequently for the education of gifted and talented children. In the early 1970s, S. P. Marland, the United States Commissioner of Education, delivered a report to Congress on the education of gifted and talented children in the United States. The report concluded that policies and programs for educating the gifted and talented children were all but non-existent. Then, in 1972 Congress created the Office of Gifted and Talented within the United States Department of Education. The USOE Advisory panel, directed by Public Law 91-230, Section 806, adopted a definition of the gifted and talented in 1973:

> Gifted and talented children are those. . .who by virtue of outstanding abilities are capable of high performance. These. . . children. . .require differentiated educational programs and/or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their (potential contribution to self and society).
>
> Children capable of high performance include those who have demonstrated any of the following abilities or aptitudes, singly or in combination.

"This is as high as I can go" Kate (right) and Beth Baumgardner like to climb trees after school.

Eddie Orr, 13, demonstrates his mathematical ability at West Junior High School, Columbia, Mo.

1) general intellectual ability, 2) specific academic aptitude, 3) creative or productive thinking, 4) leadership ability, and 5) visual and performing arts aptitude.

It can be assumed that utilization of these criteria for identification of the gifted and talented will encompass a minimum of 3 to 5 percent of the school population.

This definition is now widely used. Numerous states and school districts throughout the nation have adopted it for their programs. A Missouri study, by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, of state definitions of giftedness revealed that of the 33 states which responded to a request for information, 24 conformed closely to the USOE definition. Nine states had written more specific definitions.

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education uses both the findings of research in the field of gifted education and the definition of gifted children set forth in Missouri law (HB 474, Section 162.675, RSMO).

Missouri law defines gifted children as "children who exhibit precocious development of mental capacity and learning potential as determined by competent professional evaluation to the extent that continued educational growth and stimulation could best be served by an academic environment beyond that offered through a standard grade level curriculum."

While Missouri law makes provision only for gifted children, the USOE statement defines both gifted and talented, generally a broader group. The USOE reference to a "minimum of 3 to 5 percent of the school population" would include both talented and gifted students. (For further explanation of gifted and talented see "Gifted or Talented?")

2. Who are the gifted and talented?

Gifted and talented students are persons of exceptional promise whose capabilities predict contributions of lasting merit in widely varying fields. They come from all backgrounds with special abilities and talents ranging across a wide spectrum of human achievement. These students' abilities, talents and potential for accomplishment are so outstanding that they require special provisions to meet their educational needs.

As adults, these gifted and talented students are the leaders in government, medicine, creative arts, communicative arts, philosophy, industry and science.

3. Gifted or Talented?

Although many educators use the terms gifted and talented synonymously, such usage provides no help in clarifying the meaning of giftedness. For other educators, the term gifted refers to individuals with exceptional ability in academic areas, and the term talented refers to individuals with exceptional ability in art, music or drama. Although this usage provides definitions for the two words, it does not really clarify the meanings.

A few educators try to differentiate gifted and talented by assigning the classification of gifted only to those individuals with exceptional ability in several areas such as mathematics, science and language. They use talented to refer to individuals with exceptional ability in only one area, such as mathematics.

Finally, a few educators distinguish between gifted and talented by looking at how well individuals perform on a standardized test of cognitive abilities. For example, children who score in the top one tenth are considered gifted. Those who fall below that point are called talented.

Given the inadequate definitions of the terms gifted and talented, it is probably not useful to try to categorize individuals as being gifted or talented. Talented has no uniform definition to date, and its use contributes nothing toward solving the problems faced in identifying children between the ages of 3 and 18 who show exceptional

Students, parents and teachers (below) discuss the adventures of David Copperfield. Steve Fisch (right) wonders about an interesting character.

development for their age. Therefore, we use the terms gifted and talented in this monograph synonymously, but with the following statement in mind.

The gifted and talented are those children and youths whose abilities, talents and potential for accomplishment are so outstanding that they will require special assistance to meet their educational needs.

4. What are areas in which my child may be considered gifted?

According to the definition agreed upon by the USOE advisory panel, a child is capable of being identified as being gifted in any one or more of the following areas:

- ☑ General intelligence
- ☑ Specific academic ability
- ☑ Creative or unusual thinking
- ☑ Leadership ability
- ☑ Visual and dramatic arts (cultural enrichment)

5. Is my gifted and talented child also creative?

Creativity is often considered an important indicator of potential giftedness. However, the term is also troublesome. There is no universally accepted definition, and little is known about the early indicators of creativity.

A particular individual can be highly original in writing but not in science; therefore, the term creative, like the term giftedness, should always be attached to a specific type of performance, such as creative in painting.

Research has shown that most creative persons are gifted; however, it is not true that most gifted persons are highly creative.

6. Just another enrichment program?

An enrichment program is only one approach to a gifted program. In an enrichment program, students are not moved ahead but are provided with work in addition to the regular curriculum. The three most common types of enrichment are:

1. **Busy work** which consists of the same work at the same level but more than is required of the average student in the class. This is of no value to the gifted student and most likely causes the student to dislike school.
2. **Irrelevant academic achievement** refers to special subjects or activities for the enrichment of some intellectually talented students. This can be of value if the student is motivated to research and design a useful project.
3. **Cultural enrichment** is a valuable program teaching music, art, drama, dance, and creative writing.

However, keep in mind that these activities are of value to other students, too.

A gifted program should not be just an enrichment program, but it should provide for those select students who need to interact both with their social and intellectual peers. A gifted student should have to deal with high-level thinking skills and concepts usually absent from the regular classroom enrichment curriculum.

7. What problems do gifted children face?

Kenmare has found that some geniuses (gifted children) are characterized as being schizophrenic because they have difficulty living with their special talents and the expectations they have of themselves.[1]

Torrance states that some gifted children face problems because they cannot cope with their environment.[2] Highly creative children see themselves as being independent nonconformists. Often this feeling leads to confrontations which require that they either learn to cope with

Daniel Purcell has his own ideas about the story of Robin Hood.

arising tensions or that they repress their creative needs.

Many prominent thinkers express concern about the negative attitudes of our society toward creatively gifted individuals. Two books on this subject are:

Torrance, *Guiding Creative Talent*, 1962.

Torrance, *Mental Health and Constructive Behavior*, 1965b.

8. Are the talents of my gifted child being recognized?

An attempt is being made throughout the United States to recognize the talent of gifted children by state departments of elementary and secondary education, creative teachers, enrichment summer schools and creative parents. Actually, the requirements for helping gifted children grow are the same for all children. Every child's uniqueness and needs should be recognized because children are the best and most necessary resources of the world.

9. Should a special program be developed for my gifted child?

Special programs should be developed for gifted children. The program must challenge the individuals participating. It must differ sufficiently from the regular school program to merit the label "special program for the gifted."

Because gifted students often have a difficult time in school, there is a need for special programs. Dr. Nell Sanders, former Director of Gifted/Talented at the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, states the reasons for providing such services.

1. Special programs for the gifted are in harmony with the basic principles of American education and our democratic society, which recognize the importance of the individual and opportunities for individuals to develop their capabilities.
2. Gifted students have learning and developmental needs which are not recognized in many classrooms in the state. These needs require qualified teachers and learning opportunities.
3. Special programs for the gifted are not unlike programs for the handicapped, disadvantaged and bilingual.
4. The way our most able students are educated will have a tremendous impact upon the future of our state and nation. The survival of our nation may depend upon the values, behavior patterns, problem-solving skills and creativity our gifted students have developed.[3]

10. Should my tax dollars be spent on special programs for gifted children?

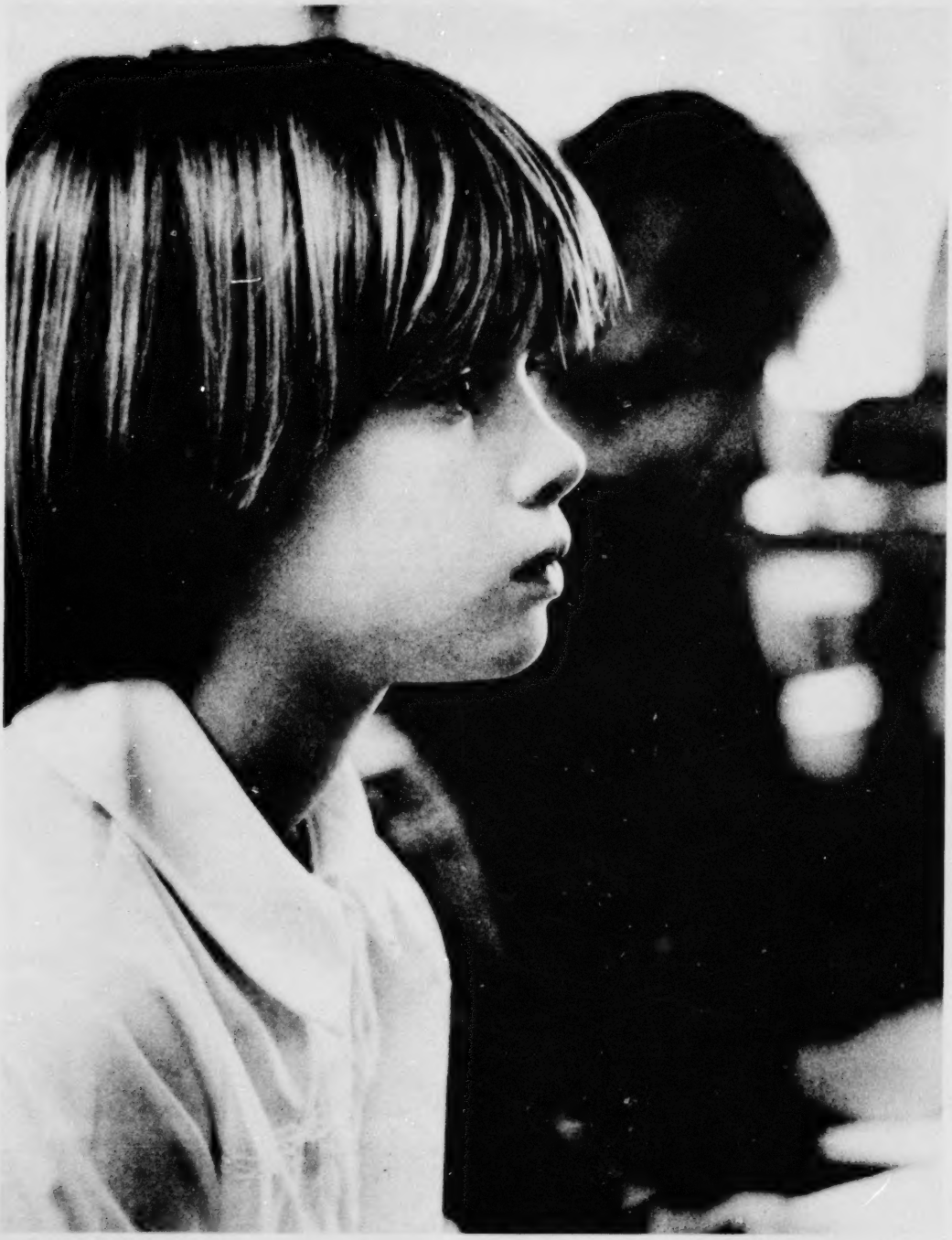
Equal opportunity is an idea espoused by our American society for any endeavor, from housing to employment. In education, the need for special programs and funding for those we used to call handicapped has long been recognized. Likewise, these gifted/talented children should have every opportunity to develop to the best of their abilities.

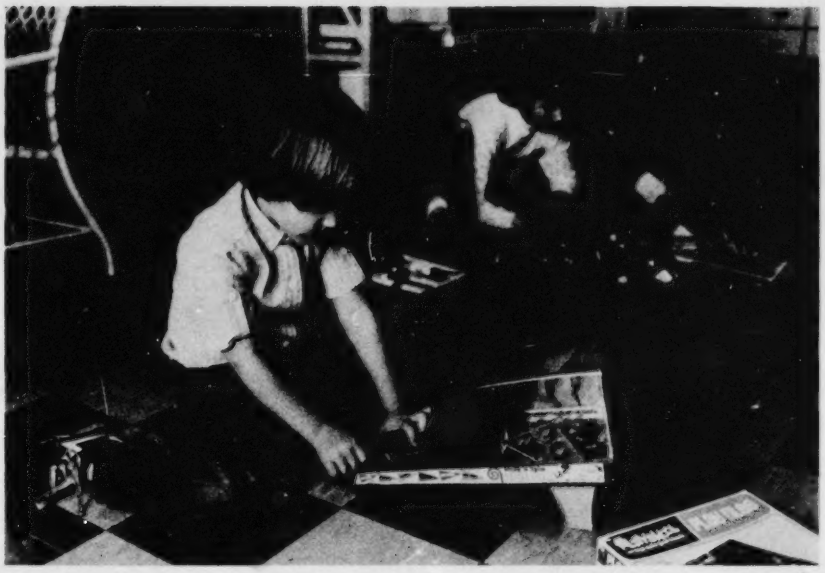
Democracy emphasizes diversity rather than uniformity, and values individual differences. If we are to provide truly equal education, then our tax dollars should help to support special programs for the gifted/talented.

11. Should children know they have been identified as gifted?

Most gifted children recognize their achievements. Occasionally, children may feel vaguely different and even suffer from inferiority complexes. Gifted children generally can be expected to meet reasonable demands and can be asked to work out real-life problems with adults. The child who feels inferior may require special counseling. In most cases, though, gifted children do not need any special interpretation or discussion of their abilities. Such discussion may be most useful when a plan for a special remedial program with a tutor is outlined (as with a child who requires temporary special help in mathematics), or when a student is discussing college and career alternatives.

How to Help Parents Identify Gifted Children





Lisa Graham (left) is a student at Russell Boulevard Elementary School. Beth and Kate Baumgardner admit that not all games work as well as those on television.

12. How can I identify giftedness in my preschool child?

It is very difficult to identify 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds who are potentially gifted. But there are a few things you can do to make it easier.

Keep a journal recording the history of your child's physical, mental, and emotional development. The more accurate and specific the record, the more useful it will be in identifying giftedness. For example, instead of noting "Johnny learned to walk at 1 year of age," a more specific record would be: "At 10 months, 1 week of age, Johnny began to take a few steps at a time without support. He would take a few steps, stop, and start again, then drop down and crawl the rest of the way."

"Development Guidelines for Preschool Age Children" have been compiled from a variety of developmental timetables, including the Bayley Scales of Infant Development, the Gesell Developmental Schedules, and the Slosson Intelligence Test. Your child need not be advanced in all areas to be considered gifted. However, if your child is about 30 percent more advanced than average on most items in at least one section of the table—in general motor ability, fine motor ability, or cognitive language—there is reason to believe that your child may be gifted. The "Developmental Guidelines" may be obtained from Eleanor G. Hall and Nancy Skinner, *Perspectives on Gifted and Talented Education: Somewhere to Turn: Strategies for Parents of Gifted and Talented Children.*

Observe your child's words and actions. With preschool children, look for achievement in the areas of language development. Reading is an excellent predictor of academic achievement in the early grades, but more general language development is better evidence. Appraise the preschool child's range of vocabulary and complexity of language.

The following list, developed by Dorothy Sisk, shows the kind of specific detail worth recording.

1. Early use of advanced vocabulary.
2. Keen observation and curiosity.
3. Retention of a variety of information.
4. Periods of intense concentration.
5. Ability to understand complex concepts, perceive relationships, and think abstractly.
6. A broad and changing spectrum of interests.
7. Strong critical thinking skills and self-criticism.[4]

The following responses by Frinier are from parents whose preschoolers were identified as gifted.

- My child displayed unusual talent in music, drawing, rhythms, or other art forms.
- My child asked many intelligent questions about topics in which young children do not ordinarily have an interest.
- My child had keen observation and retention of information about things he or she has observed.
- My child had the ability to attend or concentrate for a longer period of time than other children his or her age.
- My child had an early interest in clocks and calendars and ability to understand their function.
- My child had an early accurate use of a large vocabulary.
- My child spoke in entire sentences at an unusually early age.
- My child carries on intelligent conversations with older children and adults.
- My child learned to read early with little or no formal teaching.
- My child wrote short stories, poems or letters.[5]

13. Where can I get further information and assistance with my concerns?

If you feel your child is gifted, talk with school officials to find out what programs are available within the school district. You might also find out whether there are any private or gifted schools for preschool children in your area. Contact the education departments at universities or private colleges and your state department director for gifted/talented for other suggestions. Inquire about a Gifted Association within the

Kate Baumgardner, 5, has her own interpretation of her sister's music. Her sister, Beth, is 9 years old.

community where you could meet other parents of gifted children. Ask them what plans of action they are taking for their gifted children. Inquiring about Saturday programs, enrichment programs or summer school programs is another alternative.

14. If I have a gifted preschooler, what should I do?

First, you must become comfortable with the idea that your child is gifted. Then, you can help the child develop. It is up to you to help gifted children achieve a rich, full, productive life. The upbringing of a gifted child requires the same kind of guidance given to all children. They need limits as do all children. They shouldn't be given too much independence, and they should be taught to value others and to respect their rights.

Early learning is especially important for gifted children. With patient guidance, you can help your children learn and develop before they enter school. Paul Witty makes the following suggestions for parents:

1. Parents, as their children's first teachers, have a unique opportunity to teach by example, setting standards of reliability, honesty, thoughtfulness, and openness for their children to follow.
2. It is important for parents to interact with their children on a number of levels—verbally, intellectually, socially, and emotionally.
3. Parents can tell their children stories and try to answer their questions in terms they readily understand.
4. Gifted preschoolers need help in using language expressively. Through the use of speech and discussion, parents can help their children learn how to reason and communicate effectively.
5. Parents can acquaint their children with first-hand experiences with a variety of children's books and magazines, puppets, and puppet plays, musical instruments and children's concerts, crayons and art shows, etc.
6. Parents may introduce their children to the local library at a very young age.
7. Parents may help a child who requests help in printing and saying words.
8. Parents may assist a child learning to read.[6]

15. How should I interpret an intelligence quotient?

Intelligence scores are indicators of the children's academic potential and how they may do in the future.

Intelligence scores don't tell you how successful your child will be in life, but it allows educators to make fairly reliable predictions about the general level of academic success students will achieve.

16. Are intelligence scores the only way to identify gifted children?

Do not accept intelligence scores as the only means of identifying your child as gifted. Get as much information as possible, not only from intelligence tests, creativity tests, and achievement tests, but also from teachers, parents, peer identification, self identification, community agency recommendations, and others who have daily contact with your child. Administrators, school psychologists and counselors, curriculum specialists, artists, musicians, and others with special training are also qualified to appraise your child's special competencies.

17. Can I review the school's informational folder on my child?

The Privacy Rights of Parents and Students, Final Rule on Education Records, Federal Register, Thursday, June 17, 1976, gives parents the right to review their child's education records. Subpart B—Inspection and Review of Education Records, section C states that, "An educational agency or institution may presume that either parent of the student has authority to inspect and review the education records of the student unless the agency or institution has been provided with evidence that there is a legally binding instrument, or a State law or court order governing such matters as divorce, separation or custody, which provides to the contrary."

18. Are intelligence and achievement related?

Intelligence tests are given to determine whether your child is maturing mentally more rapidly than the average child. If your child's mental age is greater than his chronological age, your child should be a more rapid learner.

Achievement tests are often survey batteries, which are series of short tests on basic areas of educational achievement. They measure how well your child has achieved or mastered the instructional objectives.

Binet constructed his measure of general intelligence (Standford-Binet) with the purpose of identifying which children could benefit from schooling and which could not. Over the years, it has been recognized that children identified as bright by intelligence tests achieved well in school and obtained high grades, and those who were identified as unable to benefit from regular schooling did not learn well and obtained very low grades in school. Thus, it is believed that intelligence and achievement are closely related. By knowing someone's intelligence score, we could predict success in school. Sometimes achievement tests tell how well a person will do or is doing in school because high achievers are most often highly intelligent people.

19. If children have high intelligence scores but are not highly creative, are they gifted?

A child can be found intelligent according to intelligence tests, but not highly creative according to creativity tests. According to Gowan and research by Getzels, and Jackson, most creative persons are gifted, but it is not true that most gifted persons are creative.[7] Some say the best way to help students become creative is to help them develop. Gowan says that creativity is a learned skill which may be taught to anyone, gifted or not. Perhaps the difference lies in whether creativity is seen as a process of thinking and living or as original thought.

20. Is there an easy way for parents and educators to identify creative talent?

Something about Myself can help parents and educators in identifying the creative talent of children so they can help them at home, arrange special classroom groups or provide educational experiences in the classroom.

Something about Myself is one of two tests in the *Khatena-Torrance Creative Perception Inventory*.[8] The other is *What Kind of Person are You?* Both measures were designed for adolescents and adults, but younger children may take them with the help of an adult.

Something about Myself is based upon the idea that creativity can show itself in personality traits. Scoring the 50 items on the test is done by counting the number of "yes" answers. Besides the creative perception index, the test measures creativity in six areas: environmental sensitivity, initiative, self-strength, intellectuality, individuality and artistry.

21. Are creative children from deprived home environments at a disadvantage when tested for giftedness?

Disadvantaged children lack both material things and intellectual stimulation. Their environment may affect their acquisition of adequate verbal concepts and communication skills or their handling of mental operations.

Children from a lower class, nevertheless, have capacities for high future academic performance and high creative potential. Creativity tests are a good way to identify disadvantaged, talented children. Disadvantaged children do not do as well on the usual verbal I.Q. test because of alienation, lack of verbal environment motivation, lack of proper nutrition, weak background experience and possibly other reasons.

Torrance says we should identify and cultivate the talents such as instrumental and vocal music, dancing, dramatics, visual arts, and athletics, valued by a particular sub-culture. He has two suggestions for finding hidden talent among disadvantaged children:

1. Disadvantaged children should be permitted to respond in terms of their own experience. The *Torrance Test of Creative Thinking* allows children to respond in their own way.
2. To discover children's potential, they must be motivated to show that potentiality and to feel psychologically safe in doing so.

Bruch has added another suggestion:

3. For the disadvantaged, the question is not whether they perform on tests of intelligence or achievement at a currently high level, but whether their scores indicate probable development to higher levels than those at which they now function.

Torrance has some guidelines for a successful educational program for encouraging disadvantaged students to use their potential abilities.

- High nonverbal fluency and originality.
- Adept in visual art activities.
- High creative productivity in small groups.
- Highly creative in movement, dance and other physical activities.
- Highly motivated by games, music, sports, humor and objects.
- Language rich in imagery.[9]

There are two assumptions underlying Torrance's remarks. First, gifted children from disadvantaged populations cannot be identified using traditional methods. Second, disadvantaged children should be encouraged to develop skills in the arts and sciences.

Early intervention programs, such as home-based programs for 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds, have enhanced intellectual development. Moreover, home-based programs help parents understand and learn about their children.

22. Should I wait for educators to tell me whether my child is gifted?

Talk to the teacher about your child. Discuss the instructional materials and procedures that you have used at home with your child. Also, discuss the Gifted Association that you belong to with teachers to acquaint them with the source of your ideas.

23. How can I test my assumptions that my child is gifted?

The evidence schools readily accept comes from individual tests and studies by a competent psychologist. In most areas, you can find a person qualified to test your child, either through the school system, through private sources, or through a college or university. Don't expect the school to do the necessary studies automatically, even when resource personnel are available. You will have to ask them to perform the tests.

If your child has been identified and suitable provisions have not been made, talk with the teacher. You may also need to talk with a principal or supervisor who can give the teacher some help.

Barbara Savage, teacher at Russell Boulevard Elementary School, asks her class about world problems. Their answers range from pollution and politics to spelling and Rubik's cube.

Schooling for the Gifted Child

Students in Barbara Savage's class make associations between people and computers. Tanja Dajani (left) and Melissa Spease have some ideas.

24. How can I tell whether a program is good for my child?

If they are involved in a good program, children will usually go to school eagerly. They will carry their interests into the home through discussion, through voluntary search for added information or through voiced enthusiasm. School work should be challenging, with homework based on key ideas or issues and not on isolated facts. The amount of assigned homework means nothing; a large assignment is no more valuable than a good small one. The program should encourage your child to develop talents, skills and new interests.

25. How do I select the best school for my child?

If your school district has more than one attendance area, talk to officials where your child will be going to school. Request to visit classrooms and talk with different principals. Make inquiries about any private or gifted schools within the community or within a reasonable distance.

Also, you could contact the closest university for possible assistance in selecting the best school. The Parent Gifted Association, if one is available in the community, would be a good information source. Talking with other parents of gifted children is another excellent source of information concerning the facilities, teaching techniques, and programs available within the community.

Lewis Roberts, Andy Hendren, Danny Sherman, and Dan Kliebenstein (left to right) write down their answers about computers.

26. How can I help my child's teacher?

One way to get involved is to work with your child at home on a variety of enrichment activities. Ask teachers for home assignments for the child to complete. Each assignment would have instructions for the parents. Activities could involve: group projects, theme projects or independent projects.

You could also assist in the classroom with interest centers, which contain many enrichment activities. Another idea is to make activities to stimulate the gifted child's thinking. These activities could be used as independent activities or used as learning centers.

You could assist children in planning projects which would relate with their school activities. The project would have to match the child's level of ability and manual dexterity and be such that the activity could be completed at home or school.

Organizing Saturday programs for gifted children is another way to get involved. Many parents could become involved by presenting mini-courses in their particular area of expertise.

27. Can senior citizens help with the gifted program?

Senior citizens can donate their time and expertise to assist with the gifted program by:

_____ Conducting mini-courses.
_____ Making activities for students.
_____ Manning interest centers.
_____ Going on field trips.
_____ Assisting with construction activities.
_____ Reviewing reports.
_____ Hearing reports.
_____ Giving advice.
_____ Listening and responding to students.
_____ Acting as models for characteristics such as patience, tolerance, and acceptance.
_____ Assisting students in making decisions.
_____ Helping students to define their personal values.

Senior citizens can serve as another pair of hands not only for the teacher initiating a gifted program but for any regular classroom teacher. Parents need to encourage senior citizens to help. Of course, their degree of involvement with the students would depend upon their health and ability to work with gifted students.

28. Should I put my child in an accelerated program?

The goal of the accelerated class is to provide students with the opportunity to move quickly through basic subject material, thus permitting the gifted child to skip a year or to telescope their school experience. Morgan, Tennent and Gold say that unless the school has a policy for continued acceleration, it can cause problems for children. For example, if students are accelerated in a particular subject matter in elementary school, they may not be able to continue the accelerated program in junior high school and high school. If accelerated programs cannot be continued, it is usually wasted energy for the educators and a frustrating experience for the students. For acceleration to be successful, it must be continuous and coordinated. Parents should be warned of the potential problems for their gifted children. Acceleration may also cause peer problems and frustration for children.

Acceleration is most successful when it is possible to accelerate students in groups rather than in isolation. But because of the potential problems with accelerated programs, the special gifted program is probably the best choice.

29. Which grade levels will be the most demanding for my child?

At certain periods, gifted children are affected by the stress and strain of growing up, and creativity suffers. These periods occur just at the time children enter first grade, at the fourth grade level, at entry in junior high school and at entry into high school. The demands of school, peers, teachers and changes in school seem to affect children adversely. The worst of the slump seems to take place at the fourth grade level at a time when the child experiences developmental changes.

During this time, you can help your child reduce the tension by showing that you care, by providing stimulating learning and creative activities, and by encouraging greater use of fantasy, analogy and the creative imagination. You need to show children that you appreciate their creativity, and reward them for their efforts.

30. What opportunities are available beyond the classroom?

Educational opportunities range from formal course offerings to independent study. There are internships in business, in industry, in other professions and at universities; vocational and technical programs that provide opportunities for students to work in advanced areas of technology; mentorships; accelerated classes and honors programs; early admission; special summer programs; special classes and special schools; advanced placement; seminars; special tutoring; and individualized enrichment activities in conjunction with regular classroom instruction.

31. What are the characteristics of special programs?

The gifted program should provide two basic experiences for the child.

1. Gifted children should have the opportunity to be with their social peers.
2. Gifted children should have some opportunity to be with intellectual peers.

There are four main gifted programs.

- **Pull-out program.** Gifted children stay in their regular classroom with students their own age for at least a part of the day or for an entire day of the week, and are pulled out for special instruction in their areas of giftedness for the other part.
- **Self-contained classroom.** Regular teachers attempt to provide for the needs of gifted children within the classroom. They group children with like abilities with another teacher who has had some training in the area, or who can adjust the program for the students in the special group.
- **Enrichment.** Students are not moved ahead but are provided with supplementary information or skill development in addition to their regular work.
- **Acceleration.** Gifted students move through regular curriculum at their own rate.

Two possible variations of these four programs are:

- **Full-time program.** Gifted students are placed with other gifted students in special classrooms within their home school.
- **Special gifted school.** Children are pulled from their home school to attend gifted classes in another school.

If the gifted program is within the regular classroom, the regular classroom teacher might use the following approaches.

- ☑ Group gifted students within grades or departments.
- ☑ Bring supplemental activities such as speakers into the classroom.
- ☑ Encourage independent study within the regular classroom.
- ☑ Use gifted students as tutors.
- ☑ Find tutors for the gifted.
- ☑ Have ungraded classes.
- ☑ Use correspondence courses.
- ☑ Ask other teachers with specialities to share their expertise.

Programs outside the regular classroom make better use of available resources. They offer more programs of instruction designed specifically for the gifted. These programs might include the following approaches:

1. Organizing special interest groups before, during or after school.
2. Having seminars.
3. Starting mentorship programs.
4. Using community resources.
5. Setting up internship programs.
6. Having special clases (e.g., advanced placement, honors, special day classes).

Mrs. Savage helps Kim Duncan, Beth Krumm, and Amy McDonald develop decision-making skills.

Barbara Savage says that these students will be our source of ideas in the future.

7. Making resource centers.
8. Encouraging outside independent study.
9. Enrolling students in off-campus study.

Programs can gain either state or national recognition through validation. Validation determines whether a program is cost-effective, transportable, exemplary, and has a positive impact on students. Once these four criteria have been met, programs are usually validated, and they may become models for other school districts or states. Examples of state and nationally validated gifted programs include:

Institute for Creative Education
Verne Kelly
Educational Improvement Center
South Box 209
Delsea Drive
Sewell, N.J. 08080

Project Talents Unlimited
Sara Waldrop
1107 Arlington St.
Mobile, Alabama 36605
(205) 690-8860

Exceptionally Ready
Mrs. Catherine Balentino or
Mrs. Gloria Phillips
North Kingston School Department
100 Fairway
North Kingston, Rhode Island
02852

Gifted Child
2757 West Pensacola Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32304

32. Should my gifted child receive grades?

Grades are a long-standing custom, even though studies since 1922 show that they are not especially useful and that they tell little about a child's actual achievement. If grades are used in a school system, all children expect to receive them. In a regular class, gifted children can receive high grades with little effort and sometimes are under-achieving "A" students. Parents should confer with teachers and discuss the specific accomplishments and needs of their children.

In a special group of gifted students, grades should be given as if the children were being compared to the total school population. If gifted students are measured on the basis of their real achievement, they probably will receive A's. If a program is good and the students are interested, they should be producing, and their grades should be high. In the elementary school, gifted students should *never* be graded on a curve within their special group.

33. Should my child have to make up regular classroom work missed while attending the gifted class?

As a rule, the gifted child should not have to make up regular classroom work. The nature of the assignment and the knowledge each student has mastered will guide the teacher in this decision. Too often gifted children have to do work in the regular classroom that they have already mastered. To prevent this busy work, teachers must be acquainted with the activities children are working on outside the classroom. Teachers should structure regular classroom work for gifted students to enhance their abilities. In other words, the teacher must be flexible. The school board should develop and execute a policy on this issue.

34. Do special classes cause competition and bad feelings?

Special classes should not be given publicity beyond that given other groups; neither should the children be singled out to display their *giftedness* for the public. If children develop special materials and presentations for parents and other groups, other children should also be asked to perform. The class should not be designated as the *gifted class* or the teacher as the *gifted* teacher. Competition within the class will not be a problem if the program is adequately individualized. Instead, the children will assist one another with resources and solutions to mutually challenging problems. Resentment and jealousy are usually the results of improper publicity and exploitation.

Understanding Gifted Children

Eight-year-old Lance Thompson (left) is serious about his arrowhead collection. Dan Ronchetto, 15, practices swimming 15 hours a week.

35. Why is my gifted child bored?

Boredom is emptiness. When children are denied the right to be curious and explore, when they must always wait the commands of adults before acting, when their judgment is ignored, when they depend on devices other than their own abilities for entertainment, they are likely to feel empty of interesting thoughts and bored. Gifted children who are bored with school frequently become even more bored with vacation.

If your gifted child is bored, visit the school principal and politely arrange for an appointment to discuss your child's boredom. You could discuss the child's teacher, classroom situation or the possibility of transfer to a different school with a curriculum designed for gifted children.

You could also seek help from: (1) parents of the local gifted children's group, if there is one; (2) the head of the gifted children's program in your school district, if you have one; (3) your school's psychology department; (4) the top administrative official (Superintendent); (5) members of the school board; (6) the Commissioner of Education for your state; or (7) the State Department's Director of Gifted/Talented.

A conference with the child, parents, teacher, and school officials to discuss the problems that might be occurring in the classroom might lead to some compromises by everyone involved.

Counseling for both the child and the parents may be another alternative. A private counselor or one from the school system can help gifted children think through their value judgments and learn about themselves. A responsible person outside the family who is interested in your child could do much as his mentor, particularly if communications within your family are weak.

Older gifted children could work toward scholarships in art, write music, research problems in science, or attend writing seminars. Seasonal jobs with the National Parks Department or the Bureau of Land Management or participation in the Advanced Placement Programs are other options.

36. Does my gifted child belong to an elite group?

A gifted child should not be considered as part of an elite group. Some 50 years ago, William Bagley expressed his hostility toward the gifted as leaders and recommended that the majority of the average people put them in their places. Bagley did not realize that the full productivity of the talented will produce more opportunity for others rather than less. The person who

creates is also one who opens markets for distribution. The most talented among us are potential creators of opportunity for others and not isolated elitists.

37. How can I encourage my child's sense of curiosity?

Never brush off children's questions, even when they seem trivial. "Let's find out together" is a response to a child's curiosity that opens possibilities for research. Children also develop awareness by seeing things from many points of view. Curiosity leads to awareness of possibilities for exploration and discovery, and awareness is a step toward giftedness.

38. How can I avoid favoring my gifted child?

Keeping the proper perspective on "giftedness" is important. Take special care to nourish each child's talents. Those children whose qualities are unacknowledged will naturally resent those who are favored by recognition. Jealousy can destroy family happiness.

Look for strengths and weaknesses in all your children, and develop mutual support. Reduce competition among the children as much as possible by respecting differences and encouraging each child. The issue should be personal improvement and not competition.

39. How can I enhance my child's awareness of career possibilities?

Help children become aware of career possibilities by:

1. Helping them to recognize their interests and skills.
2. Writing for material on different career opportunities.
3. Accompanying them to interview people at their jobs.
4. Allowing them to work with community experts.
5. Introducing them to many talented people.
6. Learning together about the life styles of friends or acquaintances.

Girls and boys need to see men and women working at a wide variety of jobs. They also need extended help in making wise choices. We shouldn't let anyone's talents go to waste.

40. How can I help my child develop creative reading skills?

According to Gowan, Khatena, and Torrance, there are three definite steps that parents can take to encourage creativity through reading:

1. Read aloud to your child frequently. Poetry is extremely good for this purpose. Read up to a half-hour per day with your child.
2. The second step is to make your child see that you enjoy the activity and that your mind is engaged in reading too. Questions such as "What do you suppose happened next?" will help the child think about the story. Parents can also improvise on well-known nursery rhymes to make jingles and encourage children to imitate them. Suggested books are: *Who's There-Open the Door, The Elephant's Wish, Let's Imagine Thinking Up Things, Highlights for Children,* and *Poetry Drawing Book.*
3. Pick books that encourage the child to make creative responses. Children should learn to express their creativity as a result of verbal stimulation, and this will help them to develop their imagination.[10]

Torrance also recommends the use of mythology and drama, including fables and fairy tales to enrich imagery. Children like to play with words, and books like A. Ried's *Ounce, Dice, Trice,* or *Did you Ever Read a Clock Upside Down?* or *What Would You Do If?* encourage word play.

Record and preserve your gifted children's thoughts. These may be in verse or prose or illustrated. Children can keep their own journals for recording ideas. A tape recorder is another good way to record thoughts.

41. Should I treat my gifted child differently?

Gifted children should not be treated differently just because they are gifted. Sometimes, parents become more caught up with their children's achievements than in their individuality. Although they should be challenged to higher levels, they must also be acknowledged as people.

Learning to be reliant. Gifted children should not only be taken care of, they should take care of others as well. Taking care of plants or pets teaches children how to be reliant.

Sharing. Gifted children need to share experiences with the family. Sharing, talking and listening at the family dinner table is one kind of group experience.

Setting limits. Gifted children need rules. Families can give them a reassuring acquaintance with limits and rules. This will help them structure and temper their world.

Coping with loneliness. Gifted children may feel lonely because they are distinct among their contemporaries. But they must not be made to feel secretive or embarrassed about their talents, and family life can provide an arena where they can display talents unbashedly. All children need to hear and feel that they can contribute to the family. Honor the gifted child's special quality, depend on it and use it.

Dan Ronchetto and Beth Krumm.

Planning projects. Remember the extra power and concentration gifted children bring to their pursuits. The family can help the child channel this energy. One idea is to help gifted children plan projects appropriate for their level of ability and manual dexterity. Even when they fall short of expectations, help them avoid frustration and encourage them.

If you provide the stimulation, the gifted mind will make imaginative use of variety. Inquire about Saturday programs in your community for one possible source of stimulation. The arts, nature, history and athletics all can reinforce one another and expand the child's receptive and expressive limits.

Evaluate whatever teaching the child receives to see that it is of the highest quality available and demands the child's best performance. Whether the field is gymnastics, music, science, or poetry, the child must learn the discipline of the field as well as delight in its company.

Learning independence. Gifted children can learn from explanations and teaching, but they also need the opportunity to hypothesize independently. Then, they need to test their new hypotheses without ridicule. Such opportunities are just as important as a teacher's lecture or a field trip.

Time out. Provide privacy for gifted children. While they need new experiences, new ideas and new words as food for their intellect, they also need time, space and privacy. Providing the privacy in addition to the enrichment is a step some parents don't take. Some parents get caught up in a constant series of lessons and trips and feel guilty leaving their child alone. The family must guarantee privacy because children cannot do it for themselves.

Being a parent of a gifted child is a challenge, requiring stamina, courage and humor.

42. Are there people who will consider my gifted child strange?

In the past, children with extremely high intelligence have been called *strange*. These children were identified as being spindly, clumsy, withdrawn, bespectacled, arrogant, supercilious, and not capable of making friends. However, gifted programs have helped to eliminate the label of *strange* for those gifted children. Teachers are also becoming more aware of giftedness and are making attempts to provide for these highly gifted students in their classrooms. Classes are also being offered to better prepare educators for understanding gifted children.

43. How can I help my child cope with society's expectations?

Marjorie Roberts says that often the socializing skills of gifted children are weak.[11] Many times gifted children are grouped only with children of their chronological age,

and they have little chance of being with anyone of like mental age. Thus, their socialization skills suffer.

Gifted children must be allowed to have contact with children of like mental ability. Stimulation, similar interests, and abilities are the basis of friendships, and friendship is a potent social force which enables individuals to feel complete and contented.

Another view is expressed by Jeanne L. Delp and Ruth A. Martinson of Ventura, California. Often gifted children may discuss only topics of interest to others rather than their own special interests. They make the effort to establish common ground for communication. The responsibility for relating to others is usually assumed by the gifted; rarely is the reverse true. The characteristic skill with which the gifted person relates to others is an indication of social sensitivity and empathy.

Often, the gifted are popular in a social group. The fact that they are well accepted and well adjusted even in situations where no special opportunities are available to them indicates their skill in assessing a given situation and adapting to it. The real problem is that society will not meet gifted children halfway.

Various studies on the social adjustment of the gifted at the school level show that they are better accepted than the average child. They are chosen as class leaders and assume all the responsibilities for their class.

The real evidence of adjustment, however, lies in whether gifted children have a healthy self-concept. If they spent all their time trying to gain the approval of their chronological peers, they are more likely to lack self-assurance than if they are free to relate to a variety of people on the basis of common interests.

Occasionally, gifted children encounter difficulty because of their early concern with ethical problems. As a group, the gifted learn concern for others at an earlier age. They are idealistic and often insist on answers to uncomfortable questions. The gifted child who is socially adjusted can use capabilities freely for the analysis and solution of problems rather than suppressing them and pretending that they do not exist.

Kahtena suggests ways to help the child develop peer friendships by:

- Letting gifted children develop imaginary playmates to fill the void left by not having true peers.
- Finding friends who have the same mental age as the gifted child.

44. What if my child cannot cope with society?

If gifted children cannot learn to cope with society, one or more of the following problems may occur.

Children may become depressed become rebellious, develop mental health problems, refuse to adjust or alienate themselves from peers. They may experience personality problems, become belligerant, experience anxiety, repress feelings, repress creative needs or fail to obey rules.

45. Are males more creative than females?

For some reason, men are generally considered more productively creative than women. However, everyone admits that women are at least as intelligent as men, but historically men are thought to be more creative.

Some possible reasons men are considered more creative than women are:

- Cultural discrimination.
- Sexual dominance patterns established in mammals.
- The fact that women have a physical outlet for creativity in the bearing of children.
- The hypothesis that men are inclined to be rational and cognitive, while women are emotional and intuitive.
- The possibility that in women creativity is a process whereas in men it is a product.

The avenues of creativeness for women are just beginning to open. Although women are finally being accepted as creative, it will take time and patience before they are considered as creative as men.

Helping Your Gifted Child

Jennifer Imig and her mother, Gail, work together to train their horse.

46. Should I provide activities in areas besides those in which my child is gifted?

You should attempt to develop your gifted child's abilities in all areas: intellectual, aesthetic, physical, emotional, social and moral.

Intellectual and aesthetic maturity encourages the development of startling achievements, inventions and creations. This may include learning games and activities enjoyed by the whole family. Stockpile scrap materials for a young person to build imaginative inventions.

Physical development, talent in visual arts and the performing arts need to be broadened. Children need to be taken to plays and other performances. Perhaps playing a musical instrument can be started at an early age. A young child could also practice on a balance beam or go to summer camps.

Emotional development of gifted children supports their talents and gifts. Children need to be encouraged to be self-confident. Identify some activity your children do not do especially well and have them work on it. Through this experience, they will develop empathy for others who find it difficult to excel.

Social development brings up some dilemmas. Occasionally, gifted children will play happily with children of all abilities, but usually they only have one or two friends. Try to interest your child in going to a library, a museum or zoo with other neighborhood children.

Moral growth plays an essential role in the full development of gifted children.

Gifted children must learn inner control. They need help exploring, understanding and living by their personal values. They also need help with decision-making, not a simple skill even for gifted children.

47. How can parents and other members of the community become more involved with the gifted program?

Parents and members of the community can become involved by donating their time and special talents with gifted children. They can also volunteer their time to teachers to help with some of the time-consuming chores needed to make a program work.

You can also organize a Parent's Gifted Group. A parent support group may come in all shapes and

sizes, but as people begin to share with one another, it will grow. Contact the local school superintendent and other officials to inquire about organizing a local group. The next step would be to write to the State Department's Gifted Director for assistance with the formation of the new Gifted Group. With patience, time and effort, you will develop a task force to establish initial goals and objectives and a plan to achieve them. You can also work with state and national legislators to help pass legislation that will benefit gifted children.

Work to obtain scholarships to help students attend college. Contacting local community groups may be a way to help obtain monies to sponsor a child.

48. Should I be concerned about my child's fantasy life?

Fantasy is fun, good and important. The child can't live in a fantasy world forever and will eventually learn to deal with reality. Fantasies are just a part of growing up and should become less significant when children become adults.

49. How can I help my children develop up to their potential?

Here are a few ideas to encourage your child's development:

_____ Adapt for home use some activities used by teachers to stimulate higher levels of thinking.

_____ Play more complicated games with your gifted children. For example, while riding in a car try to find the similarities between things such as a telephone pole and a sign.

_____ Give them time for free thinking. Don't over schedule them.

_____ Let them explore different things to do with household objects. This gives them a chance to do something new with something old.

_____ Give them time to be alone and a quiet time.

_____ Let them daydream. This is a creative activity they need.

_____ Let them be gullible and dumb once in awhile, without correction. "A person can't be right all the time," and "See you aren't too smart" are not productive remarks.

_____ Help them analyze themselves and their environment.

50. What are some pitfalls that I should avoid?

Experienced parents of gifted children list the following pitfalls for parents of gifted children to avoid?

1. Don't force yourself into a teacher role all the time. Your children want you to be a parent.
2. Don't force your children into the gifted role all the time. There are times when they simply want to be children.
3. Don't encourage goals beyond your children's reach.
4. Don't give wholesale praise. Reserve it for the praise worthy.
5. In your efforts to encourage self direction, do not withhold direction and guidance.
6. Do not force your children to be "eggheads."
7. Don't be afraid to admit your own ignorance about something or be afraid to find someone else who can provide information beyond your knowledge.
8. Don't be afraid to make mistakes with your children.
9. Don't brag about giftedness, but defend your interest in education for the gifted on the basis of providing appropriate education for all children.
10. Don't express your dissatisfaction with the schools in front of your children. Your remarks may color their attitudes toward school.

51. Should I foster self-confidence in my gifted child?

Parents should foster self-confidence in all children, not only the gifted. All children need to feel good about themselves, their abilities and their successes. They also need to be able to recognize some of their weaknesses. The lack of self-confidence in a gifted child may not be as easily understood as in another child.

52. Do parents of gifted children need counseling?

According to Charlotte Malone and several other writers in the field of gifted education, parents have expressed a need for more counseling and a better knowledge of teaching methods. Parents have requested counseling in the areas of discipline, developing strengths, guiding sensitivity and in determining their rights. Parents soon learn that many gifted children are not the easiest to handle. Often they find it difficult to be comfortable in society, and they release these frustrations in anger to their parents, the people they most love and trust. One moment these children will say,"I hate you, and you don't love me," and in the next moment they will throw their arms around you and say, "I love you, and I'm sorry." It is wise not to fight or argue during these times.

Parents request help in the guidance of their gifted children because they want to provide the proper atmosphere in their homes for their children's learning.

53. Should I let my gifted child watch television?

Postman says that by age 18 the average young person has spent 20,000 hours watching TV and movies or listening to radio and records. This is almost double the amount of time spent in school. Because the television is always on at home, children don't have as many opportunities to talk. Then,

Jill Marie Miller and her mother enjoy an after-school seminar on David Copperfield.

when they get to school, they will not stop talking.

Some children do not recognize the difference between reality and fantasy in a television program. Also, children get accustomed to the constant activity on television, and then they expect school to be the same way. Moreover, television affects the child's ability to imagine. You have the responsibility to supervise the programs your children watch. Be a good listener to make sure your children do not misinterpret what they have heard or seen. Check out the feelings or questions the programs have left with your child.

Some of the activities you can do with your child after watching TV programs are:

- Make up different endings to the program.
- Review the program to check understanding.
- Discuss the things your family has done that would make a good TV script.
- Name the actors you would employ to play the various members of your family.
- Discuss the way your family's actions resemble those of actors on television.
- Identify the differences between commercials and the regular program.
- Discuss the techniques used in televising programs.
- Investigate why a company has a famous person endorse the product.
- Analyze how the commercial encourages the viewer to purchase the product.

54. How can I motivate my gifted child?

Your attitude is essential to the development of a gifted child. Hall and Skinner tell parents to enjoy their gifted children and to remember that they are, first of all, children.

Motivate your gifted child by:

_____ Encouraging trial and error.
_____ Encouraging novel ideas.
_____ Encouraging goals set by the child.
_____ Helping the child recognize strengths and weaknesses.
_____ Giving constructive criticism.
_____ Recognizing achievement.
_____ Encouraging independence.
_____ Being enthusiastic and optimistic.
_____ Giving honest evaluation.
_____ Setting a good example in all of these areas.

Along with a good attitude, there are many other ways to motivate a gifted child:

- Furnish books that cover a wide range of subjects and reading levels.
- Provide reference materials and laboratory equipment.
- Arrange the child's room to appeal to natural curiosity.
- Make use of resource people in the community.
- Plan field trips and library visits.
- Set aside time for reading.
- Base enrichment activities on the child's interests and hobbies.
- Plan ways to apply what the child has learned.
- Encourage participation in outside activities.

55. How can I help my child develop emotionally?

Gifted children pass through stages in emotional as well as physical growth.

The first stage of growth is **trust.** Children must establish a basic trust both in themselves and the world around them. They need to know that they can cry out, and their parents will respond to them. When parents respond in a loving way to an infant, this trust can be formed in the first two years of life.

The second stage is **autonomy.** Children in this stage are restless and almost hyperactive as they dart from stimulus to stimulus seeking to see, to know and to understand. Parents should attempt to encourage children's curiosity and drive for autonomy. They need to channel this

curiosity and not forbid it. Children will gain a sense of personal identity, importance and mastery if parents make it through this stage.

The third stage is **initiative.** Gifted children need especially strong doses of acceptance and reassurance when they meet up with peers or adults who do not understand them. Parents are a "safe harbor" for children and provide the support that children need to take the initiative with confidence. Many people think gifted children are different, so they seek home and family for assurance.

56. Why do gifted children need time out?

At a time when there is national concern about reducing school dropouts, it is perhaps dangerous to suggest that a child be encouraged and permitted to drop out even temporarily. *Time-out* means that students are still in school, but taking time off from their regular schoolwork. During these periods, the normal activities of school are suspended, and the student has a free period to think, plan, read without restraint, or meet a new group of people under new circumstances.

Goertzel and Goertzel estimated that at least 10 percent of the 400 well known people in their study described a time-out period which significantly influenced their later development.[12] Some of them were Winston Churchill, John F. Kennedy and H. G. Wells. Some people have even dropped out of school such as Edwin Land who later in his career, invented the Polaroid camera.

Not all students, even creatively gifted students need time out, but many of them do and would profit from it. Let students be themselves, and give them time to think!

57. Do I need to be involved in my child's education?

It is important to be involved from the beginning with a positive attitude toward giftedness.

Students need both their parents' support and that of the community through financial aid and resource people. Parents, students, educators, and community residents are needed to improve education.

58. How can I make sure my child's giftedness does not diminish?

Giftedness can diminish, and outward evidence of giftedness can disappear in a sterile environment. Studies show a slight rise in measured ability among children in particularly desirable home and school environments. Some studies show that poor children who attend poor schools fall back in measured ability as they grow older. Women, who have not had as many opportunities for continuing learning as men, have shown some loss in ability from childhood to middle adulthood.

Giftedness is maintained and enhanced if the environment is rich with opportunities. Parents who continue their own interest in learning are good examples for children and probably are more interesting companions to them as well.

How to Discipline Gifted Children

59. What behavioral problems do gifted children have?

Gifted children often seem to have behavioral problems when they are not challenged. Some indicators might be: not listening, dominating or tuning out during discussions, being argumentative, refusing to comply with established rules, criticizing themselves or others inappropriately, interrupting, disrupting, involving themselves in continual activity (always moving and frequently talking), teasing or ridiculing others, trying to control others, being messy with personal possessions and work, being stubborn, displaying a need for success and vulnerability to peer group rejection, escaping into verbalism, not complying with routine and classroom drills, resisting direction, being rebellious, becoming frustrated, and being gullible.

60. Should parents and educators get help to understand gifted children?

Through workshops and conferences, parents and educators can learn about personality development, mental health, behavioral problems, vocational success and social welfare. These workshops and conferences will also alert them to behavior modification techniques to use, materials that are available, activities for use both at home and school, and acquaint them with the particular discipline problems common to gifted children.

Parents need to help their children learn how to interact with others, become sensitive to other's needs and desires, learn the leadership skills, and become responsible citizens with a sense of ethics and value.

61. Why do gifted girls need counseling?

In many cases, gifted girls are under-achievers because they don't want anyone to know they are gifted. Once girls become under-achievers, they may harbor attitudes of hostility and can become highly critical of others. They feel unable to cope with their environment, and they do not feel good about themselves. Usually, these girls direct their aggression toward themselves. If girls are to grow to their maximum potential, to be all that they are capable of being, both for their own personal satisfaction, and as a valuable source of leadership for our society, then attempts must be made through counseling to meet their needs.

Gifted girls become upset because their teachers feel that certain subjects and activities are for boys only. In this situation, both the student and the teacher should receive some counseling. Unless steps are taken to change the situation, gifted girls will not reach their potential and will not learn the joy of learning.

For girls, cultural restraints may be greater during adolescence when they are attempting to work out their dual identities as women and as gifted individuals. A counselor can be of great help during this time of change.

62. How should teachers handle discipline problems with gifted children?

According to Joanne Whitmore, there are five strategies for dealing with discipline problems of gifted children.

Dialogue involves listening to the child and responding on a person-to-person basis with genuine respect, communicating acceptance of the child as a prized individual and rejection only of the inappropriate behavior. The critical skill for teachers is to communicate their feelings honestly without intimidating children. Adults must remember that gifted children perceive the authority that parents and teachers have over their lives. The dialogue process enables gifted children to identify and evaluate the social and personal consequences of the behavior in question, to examine why they persist in it, and to consider strategies for eliminating it while still satisfying the need motivating it. The dialogue process also provides opportunities for clarifying expectations for children's behavior and gaining awareness of their feelings and needs.

Understanding the self and others in terms individual and group needs, expectations, and potentialities is another strategy. The teacher may facilitate this development through class discussions and the study of human behavior, emotions, motivation and self-modification techniques.

Through **group support,** a child with a specific problem at school, can share it with classmates to seek their assistance. This group support in problem-solving can occur only in a classroom where respect and acceptance prevail. The children learn to modify their behavior through understanding.

A use of **behavior modification techniques** is only effective for short periods of time. However, gifted children's understanding and use of behavior modification is most effective in developing self-management skills. Gifted children become aware of their own

behavior and are able to read the signs pointing toward a problem event. They then seek adult or peer assistance to circumvent their own misbehavior.

Developing **self-management skills,** including initial involvement in setting limits, identifying alternatives, making plans, carrying out responsibilities and evaluating behavior is another technique. Gifted children are motivated when they are self-directed and are rewarded with more freedom of choices when they learn how to use their time and make decisions on how to accomplish objectives or to complete tasks.

63. If I am told my child has a discipline problem, what can I do to help?

Parents, as well as educators, should attempt to look for the reason for such behavior, especially if it is repeated. You should talk about the problem it poses and seek a solution. Be certain the child gets attention and approval from others for the alternative appropriate behavior. However, remember that gifted children, like all children, are mischievous and enjoy playing jokes and pranks on others. Sometimes it is wise not to take this behavior too seriously. Gifted children enjoy fun, too.

Think about how you may have contributed to the problem, and how you might solve the problem by changing your own behavior, modifying the social environment, and helping your child develop skills necessary for social and academic success.

Remember that a particular behavior may be more of a problem to you than to the child. Also think about attitudes. The child may be tired, and you may be irritable.

There are a few techniques you can use to help your gifted child.

- ☑ Provide **a working place** where your child can make and leave a mess. However, they need to know how to clean and organize the materials.
- ☑ Provide some **flexibility** that allows for prolonged work periods.
- ☑ Provide **working materials,** such as throw away items, left over paint, etc.
- ☑ Allow children to **help plan trips** and make a map, plan the food and demonstrate they are needed family members.
- ☑ **Listen and encourage** your child's ideas. It is important to share with them and provide opportunities for them to explore verbally what they believe and why.
- ☑ Provide use of the kitchen, garage, or workshop for **experiments.**
- ☑ Encourage **story-telling** and **imaginative games.** Have children expand on stories.
- ☑ Provide your child with a camera, tape recorder or other materials to **record their ideas.**
- ☑ Teach your children how to **research and solve a problem.**
- ☑ Encourage your child to **talk with all kinds of people,** such as old folks, neighbors and visitors.
- ☑ Provide **musical experiences** for your child.
- ☑ Encourage the use of **puzzles, word games** and **chess.**
- ☑ Encourage the use of their **memory** through memorizing poems or short excerpts from books.
- ☑ Foster a mature attitude in your child by providing opportunities for them to be **responsible.**

64. Should school counselors counsel gifted students?

If the school counselors have had training in the area of giftedness, understand the special problems blocking the development of creative students, they can counsel gifted students. Counseling with gifted and talented students should take place within a developmental program organized and maintained for these youngsters. Such a program takes these unique needs into account and is structured around them. There are some special guidance problems gifted children face, which need specialized attention from counselors who themselves have received specialized training.

Counseling in the domain of feelings is the natural curriculum of the counselor, as the cognitive domain is of the teachers. Counselors can be useful in promoting the mental health and hence the development of all children, but with gifted children they are vital in helping children learn creative thinking. The gifted program should be an organized, systematic program consisting of goals, objectives, rationale, a variety of counseling methodologies to meet those objectives, and a systematic means of evaluating what has or has not been accomplished.

School counselors must become involved in working with gifted and talented students through a variety of roles: as a guidance specialist with gifted students, as a consultant to teachers, administrators and parents, or as a researcher in terms of program development, program evaluation, and action research. In this way, counselors fulfill their responsibility to help gifted children become creative adults.

Notes

[1]Joe Khatena, "Educating the Gifted Child: Challenge and Response in the USA," in *Educating the Ablest*, ed. John Curtis Gowan, Joe Khatena, and E. Paul Torrance, 2nd ed. Itasca, Ill.: F.E. Peacock Publishers, Inc., 1979, p. 219.

[2]*Ibid.*

[3]Nell Sanders, "Education for the Gifted," *Missouri Schools*, March, 1980, pp. 6-8.

[4]Eleanor G. Hall and Nancy Skinner, *Somewhere to Turn: Strategies for Parents of the Gifted and Talented*, New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1980, pp. 6-7.

[5]*Ibid*, p. 7.

[6]Harry J. Morgan, Carolyn G. Tennant, and Milton J. Gold, *Elementary and Secondary Level Programs for the Gifted and Talented*. New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1980, pp. 12-13.

[7]J. C. Gowan, "Creativity and the Gifted Child Movement," in *Educating the Ablest*, ed. John Curtis Gowan, Joe Khatena, and E. Paul Torrance, 2nd ed. Itasca, Ill.: F. E. Peacock Publishers, Inc., 1979, p. 10.

[8]Joe Khatena and E. Paul Torrance, "Something About Myself," One of two tests named the *Khatena-Torrance Creative Perception Inventory*, 1976.

[9]E. Paul Torrance, "Creative Positives of Disadvantaged Children and Youth," in *Educating the Ablest*, ed. John Curtis Gowan, Joe Khatena, and E. Paul Torrance, 2nd ed. Itasca, Ill.: F. E. Peacock Publishers, Inc., 1979, p. 344.

[10]John Curtis Gowan, Joe Khatena, and E. Paul Torrance, (ed.) "Parents," in *Educating the Ablest*, 2nd ed. Itasca, Ill.: F. E. Peacock Publishers, Inc., 1979, p. 249-260.

[11]Marjorie Roberts, "Educational Implications from Recent Research Concerning the Social and Personal Adjustment of I.Q. and Highly Creative Gifted," *The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, 46, No. 2 (Winter 1980) pp. 39-42.

[12]E. Paul Torrance, "Creativity and Its Educational Implications for the Gifted," in *Educating the Ablest*, ed. John Curtis Gowan, Joe Khatena, and E. Paul Torrance, 2nd ed. Itasca, Ill.: F. E. Peacock Publishers, Inc., 1979, pp. 304-306.

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